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Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

Budget performance for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 and proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

Appropriation for 2014/15	$53,918,400
Expenditure for 2014/15	$51,059,700
Unencumbered balance for 2014/15	$2,858,700
Appropriation for 2015/16	$51,118,300
Projected expenditure for 2015/16[a]	$51,032,600
Estimated unencumbered balance for 2015/16[a]	$85,700
Proposal submitted by the Secretary-General for 2016/17	$54,289,500
Recommendation of the Advisory Committee for 2016/17	$52,550,400

[a] Estimates as at 1 February 2016.

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I. Introduction

1. **The recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions contained in paragraphs 21, 27, 33, 38 and 41 below would entail a reduction of $1,739,100 to the proposed budget of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017.** The Advisory Committee has made recommendations and observations on specific issues, where appropriate, in the paragraphs below.

2. During its consideration of the financing of MINURSO, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses dated 5 April 2016. The documents reviewed and those used for background by the Committee are listed at the end of the present report. The Committee's detailed comments and recommendations on the findings of the Board of Auditors on United Nations peacekeeping operations and on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations can be found in its related reports (A/70/803 and A/70/742, respectively).

II. Budget performance report for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015

3. By its resolution 68/296, the General Assembly decided to appropriate an amount of $53,918,400 gross ($51,637,600 net) for the maintenance of MINURSO for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015. Expenditures for the period totalled $51,059,700 gross ($48,784,400 net), leaving an unencumbered balance of $2,858,700, in gross terms, which represents 5.3 per cent of the appropriation.

4. An analysis of variances is provided in section IV of the performance report for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 (A/70/570). The underexpenditure was attributable mainly to reduced requirements under:

(a) International staff ($641,300, or 3.9 per cent), owing primarily to the higher actual average vacancy rate of 6.6 per cent, as compared with the budgeted rate of 3 per cent, and the delayed issuance of visas to the families of staff members;

(b) National staff ($605,000, or 10.2 per cent), owing mainly to the higher actual average vacancy rate of 4.7 per cent, as compared with the budgeted rate of 4 per cent, and the depreciation of the Moroccan dirham against the United States dollar;

(c) Air transportation ($574,500, or 5.2 per cent), owing mainly to the lower costs of aviation fuel resulting from the significant decrease in the global fuel price, and to the lower number of flight hours (see A/70/570, paras. 35, 36 and 44).

5. The underexpenditure was partly offset by increased requirements, primarily under:

(a) Other supplies, services and equipment ($505,600, or 11.2 per cent), owing mainly to the recording of freight costs for the acquisition of assets/equipment being budgeted under the respective procurement item classes, while the

expenditure was recorded under other supplies, services and equipment; losses on exchange rates; higher payment for general insurance; and higher bank fees;

(b) Information technology ($237,600, or 18.8 per cent), owing mainly to additional costs with respect to the acquisition of equipment, including the non-budgeted purchase of 10 sets of firewall and Wi-Fi equipment for team sites for privately owned computing devices to improve the quality of life for military observers, and the requirements for commercial communications being budgeted under communications, while the expenditure was recorded under information technology services (see A/70/570, paras. 47 and 49).

6. Upon enquiry as to the increased requirements related to privately owned computing devices under information technology, the Advisory Committee was informed that these devices include smartphones, tablets and laptop computers privately owned by military observers, where MINURSO provides Internet access for the devices. **The Advisory Committee notes the requirements related to privately owned computing devices and considers that information on such requirements in other peacekeeping missions should be included in the context of the Secretary-General's reports on peacekeeping missions.**

7. The comments of the Advisory Committee on the information presented in the performance report on individual objects of expenditure can be found, where relevant, in the discussion of the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 (A/70/696) in section IV below.

III. Financial position and information on performance for the current period

8. With respect to assessments for MINURSO, the Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 31 December 2015, a total of $1,112,300,000 had been assessed on Member States since the inception of the Mission. Payments received as at the same date amounted to $1,072,700,000, leaving an outstanding balance of $39,600,000. The Committee notes that the cash position of MINURSO was $4,539,500 as at 16 February 2016 (including $6.0 million borrowed from the closed peacekeeping mission account of the United Nations Peace Forces), which leaves a cash deficit of $8,100,700 after taking into account the three-month operating cash reserve of $12,640,200 (excluding reimbursements for troop-contributing countries). The Committee was further informed that the outstanding balance for contingent-owned equipment, as at 31 December 2015, amounted to $262,000. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that MINURSO borrowed $16,000,000 from closed missions in 2015.

9. **The Advisory Committee notes with concern that the cash position of the Mission was $4,539,500 as at 16 February 2016, which does not cover the three-month operating cash reserve of $12,640,200 (representing a shortfall of $8,100,700). The Committee recalls that the General Assembly has consistently stressed that all Member States should fulfil their financial obligations as set out in the Charter of the United Nations on time, in full and without conditions, most recently in resolution 70/247. The Committee also reiterates that the Secretary-General should continue exploring available options to address the**

issue of late payment of assessed contributions, including engaging more actively with Member States (see A/70/829, para. 17).

10. As at 31 January 2016, $80,000 had been paid in respect of two claims for death and disability compensation since the inception of the Mission. The Committee was informed that there were no pending death or disability claims.

11. The Advisory Committee was informed that, as at 31 January 2016, the incumbency of MINURSO military and civilian personnel was as follows:

	Authorized[a]	*Encumbered*	*Vacancy rate (percentage)*
Military observers	218	207	5.0
Military contingent personnel	27	26	3.7
United Nations police	12	1	91.7
Posts			
International staff	89	84	5.6
National staff	168	152	8.4
United Nations Volunteers	16	12	25.0

[a] Represents the highest authorized strength for 2015/16.

12. The Advisory Committee was provided with a table showing current and projected expenditures for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016, with the reasons for variances. Expenditure for the period as at 31 January 2016 amounted to $33,144,200. At the end of the current financial period, the total expenditure is projected to amount to $51,032,600 against the appropriation of $51,118,300, which would leave an unencumbered balance of $85,700, or 0.2 per cent.

13. With respect to ground transportation, the Advisory Committee notes from supplementary information provided to it that expenditure as at 31 January 2016 amounted to $610,000 of the apportionment of $1,090,100. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the apportionment would cover unplanned acquisitions, including the replacement of 20 general-purpose heavy-duty 4x4 left-hand-drive Jeeps at a cost of $350,000. The vehicles were originally to have been replaced by the purchase of new vehicles, but the plan was changed to replace them through inter-mission transfer. However, no suitable vehicles have been identified to replace the 20 vehicles through inter-mission transfer, so the Mission has reprioritized requirements to replace them through acquisition. **The Advisory Committee considers that the amount related to unplanned acquisitions is significant, and is not convinced that the situation regarding the replacement of these vehicles could not have been anticipated in advance. The Committee is of the view that the Mission should conduct better budgetary planning to prevent significant unplanned acquisitions in future.**

IV. Proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017

A. Mandate and planned results

14. The mandate of MINURSO was established by the Security Council in its resolution 690 (1991). The most recent extension of the mandate, to 30 April 2016, was authorized by the Council in its resolution 2152 (2014).[1] The Secretary-General states in his report on the proposed budget for 2016/17 that MINURSO plans to continue its observation and monitoring activities to ensure the compliance of the parties with the ceasefire agreement; provide continued support to the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General in the performance of his functions; facilitate the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in implementing and seeking to expand the programme of confidence-building measures; provide logistical support to the African Union representatives in Laayoune; and conduct humanitarian mine action activities to the east of the berm in cooperation with a commercial contractor (see A/70/696, paras. 1 and 7).

15. According to the Secretary-General, evolving operational requirements linked to the changing political and security environment require the Mission to establish a logistic and maintenance support hub in Tifariti that would provide timely support to the five team sites located east of the berm, in order to ensure the full self-reliance of the five team sites for operational viability in case of a sudden deterioration of security and freedom of movement (see A/70/696, para. 13). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that MINURSO regularly shares security information with missions within the Sahel region, including the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, and maintains close liaison and contacts with the Department of Safety and Security staff in neighbouring countries, as well as the Peacekeeping Operations Support Section of the Department at United Nations Headquarters.

B. Resource requirements

16. The proposed budget for MINURSO for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 amounts to $54,289,500, representing an increase of $3,171,200, or 6.2 per cent, in gross terms, compared with the appropriation of $51,118,300 for 2015/16. The proposed budget provides for the deployment of 218 military observers, 27 military contingent personnel, 12 United Nations police officers, 90 international staff, 168 national staff, 18 United Nations Volunteers and 10 Government-provided personnel.

17. An analysis of variances is provided in section III of the proposed budget (A/70/696). Increased requirements for 2016/17 relate mainly to:

(a) Air transportation ($1,485,400 or 13.9 per cent), owing mainly to the projected increase in the contractual rates for guaranteed fleet costs and the costs of flying hours, as higher rates are expected on the renewal of the aircraft contracts;

[1] During the Advisory Committee's consideration of the Secretary-General's report on the proposed budget for 2016/17, the Security Council adopted resolution 2285 (2016), extending the mandate of MINURSO to 30 April 2017.

(b) International staff ($1,121,500 or 7.4 per cent), owing mainly to the proposed vacancy rate of 6 per cent for the 2016/17 period based on historical expenditure patterns, compared with the rate of 8 per cent approved for the 2015/16 period, combined with an increase in the revised salary scale effective 1 July 2016, as well as the establishment of one Field Service post (see A/70/696, paras. 46 and 52).

18. The increased requirements are partly offset by decreased requirements, primarily under:

(a) United Nations police ($138,600 or 56.3 per cent), owing mainly to the proposed delayed deployment factor of 70 per cent in the computation of police personnel costs for the 2016/17 period, compared with a rate of 25 per cent approved for the 2015/16 period;

(b) Military observers ($134,500 or 2.3 per cent), owing mainly to the proposed delayed deployment factor of 10 per cent in the computation of military observers costs for the 2016/17 period compared with a rate of 5 per cent approved for the 2015/16 period (see A/70/696, paras. 44 and 45).

19. The Advisory Committee notes that, for the 2016/17 period, budgeted voluntary contributions in kind would amount to $4,032,099 (A/70/696, sect. II.A). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the valuation of the budgeted voluntary contributions in kind has been overstated. The Committee was informed that the corrected total amount would be $2,071,680, comprising contributions from the Government of Morocco ($1,718,346) and the Government of Algeria ($353,334). The Committee was further informed that a corrigendum to the budget report would be issued shortly. **The Advisory Committee notes the continued voluntary contributions with appreciation.**

Military and police personnel

Category	*Authorized 2015/16*[a]	*Proposed 2016/17*	*Variance*
Military observers	218	218	–
Military contingent personnel	27	27	–
United Nations police	12	12	–
Total	**257**	**257**	–

[a] Represents the highest authorized strength for the period.

20. The estimated requirements for military and police personnel for 2016/17 amount to $6,780,600, a decrease of $283,600, or 4.0 per cent, compared with the appropriation for 2015/16. The proposed decrease is primarily attributable to the delayed deployment factor under military observers and United Nations police, as mentioned in paragraph 18 above.

21. The Secretary-General requests the provision of $731,300 for food rations for military observers, representing an increase of $114,500, or 18.6 per cent, compared to the 2015/16 apportionment of $616,800. The proposed increase for rations is mainly due to an anticipated 20 per cent increase in the unit cost of food rations and an 11 per cent increase in the warehousing cost of rations. Upon enquiry as to the 20 per cent increase in the unit cost of food rations, the Advisory Committee was informed that, under the rations contract that was due to expire on 29 May 2015, the

ceiling per person per day rate was 6.688 euros and the warehousing cost was 19,088 euros per month. Following the unsuccessful new solicitation process at United Nations Headquarters, an extension was negotiated with the current contractor for the period from 30 May 2015 to 13 November 2016, with an increase in the rates to 7.023 euros and 20,267 euros, respectively. The budget estimates for the 2016/17 period were calculated using the ceiling per day rate of 8.03 euros and 21,379 euros per month for the warehousing cost. **Taking into account the information provided, the Advisory Committee is of the view that the proposed budget should be adjusted to reflect the ceiling per person per day rate of 7.023 euros, and 20,267 euros for the monthly warehousing cost for the period from 1 July 2016 to 13 November 2016.**

22. **Subject to its recommendation in paragraph 21 above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the resources requested for military and police personnel.**

Civilian personnel

Category	*Approved 2015/16*[a]	*Proposed 2016/17*	*Variance*
International staff	89	90	1
National staff[b]	168	168	–
United Nations Volunteers	16	18	2
Government-provided personnel	10	10	–
Total	**283**	**286**	**3**

[a] Represents the highest level of approved strength.
[b] Includes National Professional Officers and national General Service staff.

23. The estimated requirements for civilian personnel for 2016/17 amount to $22,201,400, an increase of $1,438,700, or 6.9 per cent, compared with the appropriation for 2015/16. The increased requirements under civilian personnel for 2016/17 are mainly attributable to higher requirements under international staff, as mentioned in paragraph 17 (b) above.

24. The cost estimates for civilian personnel reflect vacancy factors of 6 per cent for international staff, 0 per cent for National Professional Officers, 7 per cent for national General Service staff, 30 per cent for United Nations Volunteers and 70 per cent for Government-provided personnel (see A/70/696, para. 34).

25. The Advisory Committee notes from supplementary information provided to it that, under international staff, the estimated unencumbered balance for the 2015/16 period amounts to $674,100, owing to overestimation of common staff costs. The Committee was also informed that for the 2016/17 period, proposed requirements under common staff costs for international staff represent an increase of $350,800 compared with the appropriation for 2015/16. The Committee notes that the increases under this object of expenditure for both 2015/16 and 2016/17 would amount to $1,024,900. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the overestimation in 2015/16 was due to fewer actual and anticipated trips for home leave and family visits, fewer claims of education grant and education grant travel and a lower actual vacancy rate for international staff. The Committee was also informed upon enquiry that the proposed increase for 2016/17 is mainly due to

the application of a lower vacancy rate of 6 per cent, as compared to the rate of 8 per cent applied in 2015/16, the establishment of one additional Field Service post and an anticipated increase in steps within grades for international staff. **The Advisory Committee trusts that the Secretary-General will provide an update on the actual common staff costs to the General Assembly at the time of its consideration of the proposed budget.**

Posts

26. The Secretary-General proposes to establish three posts/positions, comprising one Field Service post (Security Officer in the Security Section) and two United Nations Volunteer positions (one Fuel Assistant in the Surface Transportation Section and one Generator Mechanic in the Engineering Section). With respect to the Field Service post of Security Officer in the Security Section, the Secretary-General states that the incumbent would provide security information analysis and threat assessment for all United Nations personnel and eligible dependants under the United Nations security management system and conduct security information collection and analysis, as well as coordination with other components of the Mission. He also states that, as a result of the abolishment of the Field Service post in the 2015/16 period on the basis of the civilian staffing review, the Mission does not currently have the capacity for security information analysis (see A/70/696, para. 31).

27. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed of the functions performed by the existing capacity in the Security Section. The Chief Security Officer (P-4) is responsible for maintaining awareness of prevailing local security conditions, identifying probable threats, advising United Nations personnel of the preventive steps to follow and undertaking threat assessments. The Deputy Chief Security Officer (P-3) coordinates security plans for the Mission and contributes to security risk assessments. The Committee was further informed that the functions of the proposed post, which were previously undertaken only by the incumbent of the Field Service post abolished on the basis of the civilian staffing review, require specialist training. **Taking this information into consideration, the Advisory Committee is of the view that the existing capacity within the Security Section could perform the functions of the proposed Field Service post of Security Officer. The Committee also notes that the proposed post would be responsible for the functions previously performed by an abolished Field Service post which MINURSO had proposed for abolishment, in the context of the Mission's proposed budget for 2015/16, on the basis that the functions would be absorbed by the remaining staff of the Security Section (see A/69/730, para. 33; and A/69/839/Add.3, para. 24 (a)). For these reasons, the Advisory Committee recommends against the establishment of the Field Service post of Security Officer in the Security Section. Any post-related operational costs should be adjusted accordingly.**

28. Regarding the two proposed United Nations Volunteer positions (one Fuel Assistant in the Surface Transportation Section and one Generator Mechanic in the Engineering Section), the Secretary-General indicates that the incumbent of the proposed Fuel Assistant position would undertake the monthly maintenance and repair of fuel bladders and tanks, record fuel consumption on a weekly basis, prepare team sites for the new electronic fuel systems equipment and for the transition from bladders to tank, and train team sites' military personnel on best

practices with respect to fuel accounting, equipment handling and fraud prevention. With respect to the proposed Generator Mechanic position, the Secretary-General states that the incumbent would install new generators, maintain the power supply systems, diagnose and troubleshoot causes of malfunctions and provide scheduled routine and preventive maintenance (see A/70/696, paras. 29 and 30).

29. Upon enquiry as to whether these functions could be performed by local staff, the Advisory Committee was informed that, owing to the restrictions placed on the movement of personnel from east of the berm to the west or vice versa, only international personnel are permitted to cross. The Committee was also informed that the proposed Fuel Assistant position would be responsible for the five new fuel bladders installed in the five team sites to the east of the berm, with a total operational quantity/volume of fuel of approximately 265,000 litres. The Committee was further informed that the proposed Generator Mechanic position would be responsible for 15 generators distributed among the five team sites on the east side of the berm, which provide power to MINURSO team sites on a round-the-clock basis and are the only source of power supply in the desert. **In the light of the expected functions of the two proposed positions, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the proposed establishment of the United Nations Volunteer positions of Fuel Assistant in the Surface Transportation Section and Generator Mechanic in the Engineering Section.**

30. **Subject to its recommendation in paragraph 27 above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the requested resources for civilian personnel.**

Operational costs

(United States dollars)

	Apportioned 2015/16	*Proposed 2016/17*	*Variance*
Operational costs	$23,291,400	$25,307,500	$2,016,100

31. The estimated requirements for 2016/17 amount to $25,307,500, representing an increase of $2,016,100, or 8.7 per cent, compared with the appropriation for 2015/16. The increase is attributable mainly to increased requirements under air transportation, as referred to in paragraph 17 (a) above; and, under ground transportation, an increase of $336,300, or 30.9 per cent, owing mainly to the proposed acquisition of 12 heavy-duty vehicles to replace 40 heavy-duty vehicles that have surpassed their useful life and the repair of which is uneconomical, as well as the acquisition of vehicle workshop equipment and repairs and maintenance (see A/70/696, para. 51).

Official travel

32. The proposed budget includes a request of $725,200 for official travel, representing an increase of $54,800, or 8.2 per cent, compared with the apportionment of $670,400 for 2015/16. The proposal comprises $214,000 for within-mission non-training travel; $264,000 for out-of-mission non-training travel; and $247,200 for training travel. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with information regarding planned travel for 2016/17. Under executive direction and management, 10 trips are planned, of which 4 are for conferences as

requested by United Nations Headquarters. In the support component, 10 trips are planned, of which 8 are for conferences, including 3 in New York.

33. **The Advisory Committee is not convinced that all the trips planned under out-of-mission travel are justified. The Committee recalls in this context that since 2011 the General Assembly has endorsed a number of the measures aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of resources dedicated for official travel. The Committee has also previously made recommendations regarding the consolidation of trips, minimizing the number of travellers per trip and utilization of alternative means of communication. Consequently, the Advisory Committee recommends against the proposed increase of $54,800; the resources for official travel should be maintained at the 2015/16 level of $670,400.**

34. The Advisory Committee notes that the Mission's rate of compliance with the Organization's 16-day advance purchase policy should be further improved during the 2016/17 period. In this connection, the Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that for the 2014/15 period, only 69.3 per cent of travel arrangements were in compliance. The Committee provides further comments on this subject in connection with its report on the findings of the Board of Auditors on the United Nations peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 (A/70/803).

Facilities and infrastructure

35. The Secretary-General requests the provision of $3,197,800 under facilities and infrastructure, representing an increase of $218,000, or 7.3 per cent, as compared with the apportionment of $2,979,800 for 2015/16. The increased requirements relate to the acquisition of water treatment and fuel distribution equipment; acquisition of generators and electrical equipment; sanitation and cleaning materials; security services; and acquisition of prefabricated facilities, accommodation and refrigeration equipment, owing to the installation of 100-person kitchens at two team sites (see A/70/696, para. 50). Upon enquiry as to the necessity of 100-person kitchens, the Advisory Committee was informed that these were prefabricated structures designed to service up to 100 persons, and that an advantage of the kitchens was that they were contained in flat-packs for easy transportation and installation with low maintenance costs. **While the Advisory Committee does not recommend any reductions at this stage, it recommends that the utilization and costs related to these kitchens be kept under review, and that information in this regard be provided in the next report of the Secretary-General.**

36. Upon enquiry as to the security services, the Advisory Committee was informed that the resources relate to the contractual service for security guards at the Liaison Office in Tindouf. The Committee makes observations and comments on the use of private security personnel in peacekeeping missions in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations (A/70/742).

Air transportation

37. The proposed budget includes the amount of $12,185,200 under air transportation for 2016/17, representing an increase of $1,485,400, or 13.9 per cent, as compared with the apportionment of $10,699,800 for 2015/16. The Committee was informed that the increased requirements are due mainly to the projected increase in

the cost of operation of the Mission's aircraft fleet with respect to the contractual rates for guaranteed fleet costs and the costs of flying hours, as higher rates are expected on the renewal of the aircraft contracts (see also para. 17 (a) above).

38. Upon enquiry as to the expected higher contractual rates, the Advisory Committee was informed that the existing MINURSO contracts for two rotary-wing and two fixed-wing aircraft will expire on 10 September and 31 October 2016, respectively. The Committee was also informed that, in formulating its budget estimates for the 2016/17 period, MINURSO used recently awarded contracts of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) for the same types of aircraft, the costs of which are higher than the existing MINURSO contracts. The Committee was further informed that the proposed increase under the new contracts amount to $1,715,760 for the two rotary-wing aircraft and $389,790 for the two fixed-wing aircraft, as compared with the current period. **The Advisory Committee was not provided with any rationale for applying the higher contractual rate utilized in MONUSCO as the basis for the cost estimate in MINURSO, and the Committee is not convinced that lower rates utilized by other missions could not have been applied instead. The Committee is of the view that MINURSO should review its cost estimates; in particular, it should consider using the contractual rates of neighbouring missions with similar aircraft fleets as the costing basis. Therefore, the Advisory Committee recommends against the proposed increase of $1,485,400; the resources under air transportation should be maintained at the 2015/16 level of $10,699,800.**

Other supplies, services and equipment

39. Under other supplies, services and equipment, the Secretary-General proposes the amount of $3,264,600 for mine detection and mine-clearing services for 2016/17, representing an increase of $75,400, or 2.4 per cent, as compared with the apportionment of $3,189,200 for 2015/16. The Secretary-General states that MINURSO is planning to clear 5,000,000 square metres of subsurface area of land from known threats of landmines/explosive remnants of war through technical surveys and manual and mechanical demining. The Mission will also continue to maintain liaison with both parties to the conflict on mine action initiatives, provide landmine and explosive remnants of war safety training to MINURSO personnel and bolster mine action capacity development efforts through the deployment of a consultant to work with local mine action stakeholders (see A/70/696, paras. 40-42).

40. The Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that the Mission is following the previously stated timetable of 10 years, meaning that there are 9 years left to address high- and medium-threat areas. The timetable is based on several factors including terrain, nature of the threat, methodology and the number of assets available to deploy. The Committee was also informed that high- and medium-threat areas east of the berm total 93,776,767 square metres of land (excluding the 5 km buffer strip) and the clearance rate varies between 1,000 and 20,000 square metres per day. In the previously concluded 10-year timetable, 242 cluster strike areas and 5 minefields were cleared. The Committee was further informed that the requested resources would cover the cost of a commercial contractor, the salaries of four United Nations Mine Action Service personnel, the cost of a consultant and travel and other operational costs. The Committee's observations and comments on this

issue are contained in its report on cross-cutting issues related to peacekeeping operations (A/70/742).

41. The Secretary-General also requests the amount of $77,800 under uniform, badge and gear for 2016/17, representing an increase of $33,000, or 73.7 per cent, as compared with the apportionment of $44,800 for 2015/16. Upon enquiry as to the significant increase, the Advisory Committee was informed that the personal protection gear procured in the 2014/15 period arrived later than planned and was sufficient to meet the requirements of the 2015/16 period. Consequently, no resource requirements were proposed in the 2015/16 budget for gear, and the approved amount of $44,820 was only for uniform and badge, whereas the proposed resource requirements for the 2016/17 period are for uniform, badge and gear. **In the light of the explanation that the difference between the 2016/17 proposed amount and the 2015/16 approved amount relates only to the procurement of gear owing to the adequate provision of resources from the 2014/15 period, and noting that the approved apportionment for the 2014/15 period in the amount of $46,700 covered uniform, badge and gear, the Advisory Committee recommends that the amount under this object of expenditure be maintained at the 2014/15 level in the amount of $46,700.**

42. **Subject to its recommendations in paragraphs 33, 38 and 41 above, the Advisory Committee recommends approval of the requested resources for operational costs.**

Other matters

43. The Secretary-General states that the Mission strengthened the greening committee, which will ensure that all the Mission's activities are conducted in an environmentally compliant manner. The Mission will also seek efficiency gains in power consumption through efficient analysis of statistical data and proper monitoring of electric power utilization (see A/70/696, paras. 18 and 19). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed of the projects that have been implemented in this regard, including the installation and operation of eight wastewater treatment plants; the installation of high tension transformers connected to the national grid, which uses renewable energy; the installation of one wind turbine generator and solar panels for water heaters; and the collection for proper disposal of used oil and filters, medical hazardous wastes and expired drugs and vaccines. The Committee was also informed that in November 2015, the Mission, with the support of the United Nations Global Service Centre, commenced a design study for the implementation of a solar power generation system.

44. The Advisory Committee recalls that, by its resolution 69/307, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to reduce the overall environmental footprint of each peacekeeping mission, including by implementing environmentally friendly waste management and power generation systems, in full compliance with the relevant rules and regulations, including, but not limited to, the United Nations environmental and waste management policy and procedures. **The Advisory Committee encourages MINURSO to strengthen its efforts to reduce its overall environmental footprint, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/307.**

V. Conclusion

45. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of MINURSO for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 are indicated in section V of the performance report (A/70/570). **The Advisory Committee recommends that the unencumbered balance of $2,858,700 for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015, as well as other income/adjustments amounting to $745,400 for the period ended 30 June 2015, be credited to Member States.**

46. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of MINURSO for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 are indicated in section IV of the proposed budget (A/70/696). **Taking into account its recommendations in paragraphs 21, 27, 33, 38 and 41 above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly appropriate the amount of $52,550,400 for the maintenance of MINURSO for the 12-month period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017, should the Security Council decide to continue the mandate of MINURSO.**

Documentation

- Budget performance of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 (A/70/570)
- Budget for the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 (A/70/696)
- Report of the Board of Auditors on United Nations peacekeeping operations for the 12-month period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 (A/70/5 (Vol. II), chap. II)
- Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on cross-cutting issues related to United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/70/742)
- Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (A/69/839/Add.3)
- General Assembly resolutions 68/296 and 69/305 on the financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
- Security Council resolution 2218 (2015)